

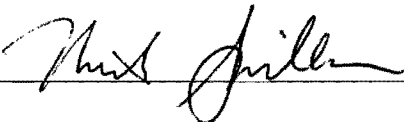
**Biblical Perspectives: Jesus as Logos  
Based on John 1:1-18**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Kathleen Sheets

Thesis Advisor  
Michael Spillman



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Ball State University  
Muncie, IN

May 1, 2008

Expected Date of Graduation  
May 3, 2008

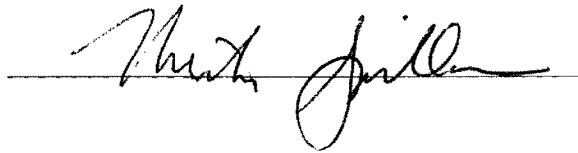
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Spillman", is written over a horizontal line.

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## Abstract

This thesis addresses the concept of logos within a biblical context in John 1:1-18, particularly how it applies to history, Christianity, and the concept of a liberal arts education. The film also speaks to how John 1:1-18 influences Christian ideas regarding of the start of the universe and of Jesus' character, asking "what does it mean to say Jesus is the embodied knowledge of God" and "how can Jesus' identity of embodied knowledge fuel the identity of those who strive to be like Jesus." The film encompasses the perspectives of pastors, professors, and students all seeking to find their own understanding on this topic.

## Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank Michael Spillman for advising me through this project. He helped me to better refine my ideas in order to turn this project into a film that people would actually want to watch. I am grateful for the time and attention he put in for this project.
- I would like to thank my contributors: Alex Robinson, Joe Lieway, Maria Williams-Hawkins, Carrie Jo Miller, Dave Jewitt, Jincy Gibson, Kasey Butcher, and Rachel Fulton, without whom this project would quite literally be impossible.
- I would also like to thank Paul Raineri and Jason Higgs, whose classes inspired the subject and the graphics respectively for this film.
- I would also like to thank Anna Urbanski for her help with filming as well as critiquing my project.

## Authors Statement

Over a year ago I was sitting in my Introduction to English Studies class and we were discussing how various concepts in language such as rhetoric, pathos, ethos, and logos transcend their original Greek origins to have applicability throughout many various niches in the scope of

civilization. This concept stayed on my mind for the next few days. The more I thought about particularly the idea of “logos,” and how it encompasses reason, wisdom, knowledge and the ways it is manifested through words, thoughts, and actions, I realized that it also had significant applicability within concepts I’ve come to understand in my Christian faith.

John 1:1-18 starts out “in the beginning was the word,” which previously had been some vague concept of possibly some booming voice in the vast expanse of nothingness. However, once I came to realize that this “word” that was mentioned in John 1 stems from the original Greek which says in the beginning was logos, I realized that so much more can actual be derived from this passage.

Within that Introduction to English Studies class we were to choose language/rhetoric topics in order to convey some of our own realizations about language through some form of a project. Still thinking through the concept of logos, I decided that the most interesting and applicable topic for me would be to research the connection between the Greek historical concept of logos and the biblical concept of logos. I decided that this project would take the form of a film and went about interviewing eight different subjects who I believe had their own unique perspectives and opinions on the topic.

After these interviews I compiled a film that featured the interviewees’ responses to questions I asked on the topic of logos, Jesus’ character, the start of the universe, and liberal arts education. This initial film was quite long, but didn’t seem to really say much as the interviews were presented in a very raw, non-cohesive manner. Though this project was much more than was required for that particular class and I easily achieved a good grade for it, I was not personally satisfied with either my story-telling abilities in linking the various interviewees in discussion with one another or in my technical abilities in the actual production of the film.

Fast forward to November 2007: I needed to come up with an honors thesis topic, and really wanted to do something that would reflect both my knowledge and interest in religious

studies as well as my expertise and story-telling abilities in telecommunications. I remembered back to the Introduction to English Studies project, and the dissatisfaction I felt at leaving that project so unfinished, and realized that revisiting this topic would be the perfect honors thesis for me.

From this point I watched my original footage repeatedly, this time working hard to construct a logical outline and flow for the film. This time around I was able to work with my advisor for the project, Michael Spillman, and discuss what was and was not working as far as the storytelling aspect of this film.

We discussed particularly the issue of how to make the piece cohesive. After much discussion about my desire to provide structure for the audience without distancing them through the use of a narrator who was unrelated to the film itself, we decided upon having me host the film myself. I believe that my hosting in particular gives viewers concrete ideas on what to expect from the film, and at the end of the film, helps viewers to tie together all that they've heard within the context of the film.

We also discussed the issue of having sources with credibility in relation to the topic of the film. Since I wanted this film to feature various biblical perspectives, while still being something that I could use within my congregation in my future occupation as Presbyterian minister, I was more than content with the contributors in the film, but Michael Spillman and I discussed the importance of helping the audience to understand the purpose and the credibility of each source. In the end, I was able to do this quite simply, by supporting each contributor with appropriate titling under their name as they appeared on screen.

Overall, I would say that I am quite pleased with the results of this project and believe that it really does reflect some of my best work within both the telecommunications and religious studies departments here at Ball State.